Numb. CLVII.

The GUARDIAN.

Go to the Ant thou Sluggard; consider her Ways, and be wise.
Solomon.

Thursday, September 16. 1713.

IT has been observed by Writers of Morality, that in order to quicken Human Industry, Providence has so contrived it, that our daily Food is not to be procured without much Pains and Labour. The chase of Birds and Beasts, the several Arts of Fishing, with all the different kinds of Agriculture, are actually Scenes of Business, and give Employment to the greatest part of Mankind. If we look into the Brute Creation, we find all its Individuals engaged in a painful and laborious way of Life, to procure a necessary Sustenance for themselves, or those that grow up under them: The Preservation of their Being is the whole Business of it. An Idle Man is therefore a kind of Monster in the Creation. All Nature is busie about him; every Animal he sees reproaches him. Let such a Man, who lies as a Burthen or dead Weight upon the Species, and contributes nothing either to the Riches of the Common-wealth, or to the Maintenance of himself and Family, consider that Instinct with which Providence has endowed the Ant, and by which is exhibited an Example of Industry to rational Creatures. This is set forth under many surprising Instances in the Paper of Yesterday, and in the Conclusion of that Narrative, which is as follows:

'Thus my Ants were forced to make shift for a Livelihood, when I had shut up the Garret, out of which they used to fetch their Provisions. At last, being sensible that it would be a long time before they could discover the small Heap of Corn, which I had laid up for them, I resolved to shew it to them.

'In order to know how far their Industry could reach, I contrived an Expedient, which had good Success: The thing will appear incredible to those, who never considered, that all Animals of the same Kind, which form a Society, are more knowing than others. I took one of the largest Ants, and threw her upon the small Heap of Wheat. She was so glad to find her self at Liberty, that she ran away to her Nest, without carrying off a Grain; but she observed it: For an Hour after all my Ants had Notice given them of such a Provision; and I saw most of them very busie in carrying away the Corn I had laid up in the Room. I leave it to you to judge, whether it may not be said, that they have a particular Way of communicating their Knowledge to one another; for otherwise how could they know one or two may say so, Three different Cities, governed by the same Laws, and observing the same Order, and the same Customs. However there was this Difference, that the Inhabitants of one of those Holes seem'd to be more Knowing and Industrious than their Neighbours. The Ants of that Nest were disposed in a better Order; their Corn was finer; they had a greater Plenty of Provisions; their Nest was furnished with more Inhabitants, and they were bigger and stronger: It was the Principal and the Capital Nest. Now I observed that those Ants were distinguished from the rest, and had some Pre-eminence over them.

'Tho' the Box-full of Earth, where the Ants had made their Settlement, was generally free from Rain; yet it rained sometimes upon it, when a certain Wind blew. It was a great Inconvenience for those Insects: Ants are afraid of Water; and when they go a great way in quest of Provisions, and are surprised by the Rain, they shelter themselves under some Tile, or something else, and don't come out 'till the Rain is over. The Ants of the Principal Nest found out a wonderful Expedient to keep out the Rain: These was a small Piece of a flat Slate, which they laid over the Hole of their Nest, in the Day-time, when they foresaw it would Rain, and almost every Night. Above Fifty of those little Animals, especially the strongest, surrounded that Piece of Slate, and drew it equally in a wonderful Order: They removed it in the Morning; and nothing could be more Curious than to see those little Animals about such a Work. They had made the Ground uneven about their Nest, insomuch, that the Slate did not lye flat upon it, but left a free Passage underneath. The Ants of the two other Nests did not so well succeed in keeping out the Rain: They laid over their Holes several Pieces of old and dry Plaister one upon the other; but they were still troubled with the Rain, and the next Day they took a world of Pains to repair the Damage. Hence it is, that those Insects are so frequently to be found under Tiles, where they settle themselves to avoid the Rain. Their Nests are at all times covered with those Tiles, without any Incumbrance, and they lay out their Corn and their dry Earth in the Sun about the Tiles, as one may see every Day. I took care to cover the two Ants-Nests that were troubled with the Rain: As for the Capital Nest, there was no need of

went about it in the following manner. In a Corner of a Kind of a Terrass, at a considerable Distance from the Box, I found a Hole swarming with Ants much larger than all those I had already seen; but they were not so well provided with Corn, nor under so good a Government. I made a Hole in the Box like that of an Ants-Nest, and laid, as it were, the Foundations of a new City. Afterwards I got as many Ants as I could out of the Nest in the Terrass, and put them into a Bottle, to give them a new Habitation in my Box; and because I was afraid they would return to the Terrass, I destroyed their old Nest, pouring boyling Water into the Hole, to kill those Ants that remained in it. In the next place, I filled the new Hole with the Ants that were in the Bottle; but none of them would stay in it: They went away in less than two Hours; which made me believe, that it was impossible to make a fourth Settlement in my Box.

'Two or three Days after, going accidentally over the Terrass, I was very much surprised to see the Ants Nest which I had destroyed very artfully repaired. I resolved then to destroy it entirely, and to settle those Ants in my Box. To succeed in my Design, I put some Gun-powder and Brimstone into their Hole, and sprung a Mine, whereby the whole Nest was overthrown; and then I carried as many Ants as I could get, into the place which I designed for them. It happened to be a very Rainy Day, and it rained all Night; and therefore they remained in the new Hole all that time. In the Morning, when the Rain was over, most of them went away to repair their old Habitation; but finding it impracticable by reason of the Smell of the Powder and Brimstone, which kills them, they came back again, and settled in the Place I had appointed for them. They quickly grew acquainted with their Neighbours, and received from them all manner of Assistance out of their Holes. As for the Inside of their Nest, none but themselves were concerned in it, according to the inviolable Laws establish'd among those Animals.

'An Ant never goes into any other Nest but her own; and if she should venture to do it, she would be turn'd out, and severely punish'd. I have often taken an Ant out of one Nest, to put her into another; but she quickly came out, being warmly pursu'd by two or three other Ants. I tried the same Experiment several times with the same Ant; but at last the other Ants grew impatient, and tore her to pieces. I have often frighted some Ants with my Fingers, and pursued them as far as another Hole, stopping all the Passages to prevent their going to their own Nest. It was very natural for them to fly into the next Hole: Many a Man would not be so cautious, and would throw himself out of the Windows, or into a Well, if he was pursued by Assassins. But the Ants I am speaking of, avoided going into any other Hole but their own, and rather tried all other ways of making their Escape: They never fled into another Nest, but at the last Extremity; and sometimes rather chose to be taken, as I have often experienc'd. 'Tis therefore an inviolable Custom among those Insects, not to go into any other Hole but their own. They don't exercise Hospitality; but they are very ready to help one another out of their Holes. They put down their Loads at the Entrance of a neighbouring Nest; and those that live in it carry them in.

'They keep up a sort of Trade among themselves; and 'tis not true that those Insects are not for lending: I know the contrary: They lend their Corn; they make Exchanges; they are always ready to serve one another; and I can assure you, that more Time and Patience would have enabled me to observe a Thousand Things more Curious and Wonderful than what I have mentioned. For Instance, how they lend, and recover their Loans; whether it be in the same Quantity, or with Usury; whether they pay the Strangers that work for them, &c. I don't think it impossible to examine all those Things; and it would be a great Curiosity to know by what Maxims they govern themselves: Perhaps such a Knowledge might be of some Use to us.

'They are never attack'd by any Enemies in a Body, as it is reported of Bees: Their only Fear proceeds from Birds, which sometimes eat their Corn when they lay it out in the Sun; but they keep it under Ground, when they are afraid of Thieves. 'Tis said, that some Birds eat them; but I never saw any Instance of it. They are also infested by small Worms: but they turn them out, and kill them. I observ'd, that they punish'd those Ants, which probably had been wanting to their Duty: Nay, sometimes they kill'd them; which they did in the following manner. Three or four Ants fell upon one, and pull'd her several ways, till she was torn in pieces. Generally speaking they live very quietly; from whence I infer that they have a very severe Discipline among themselves, to keep so good an Order; or that they are great Lovers of Peace, if they have no Occasion for any Discipline.

'Was there ever a greater Union in any Commonwealth? Every thing is common among them; which is not to be seen any where else. Bees, of which we are told so many wonderful things, have each of them a Hole in their Hives; their Honey is their own; every Bee minds her own Concerns. The same may be said of all other Animals: They frequently fight, to deprive one another of their Portion. It is not so with Ants: They have nothing of their own: A Grain of Corn which an Ant carries home, is deposited in a common Stock: It is not designed for her own Use, but for the whole Community: There is no Distinction between a private and a common Interest. An Ant never works for her self, but for the Society.

'Whatever Misfortune happens to them, their Care and Industry find out a Remedy for it; Nothing discourages them. If you destroy their Nests, they will be repaired in two Days. Any Body may easily see how difficult it is to drive them out of their Habitations, without destroying the Inhabitants; for, as long as there are any left, they will maintain their Ground.

'I had almost forgot to tell you, Sir, that *Mercury* has hitherto prov'd a mortal Poison for them; and that it is the most effectual way of destroying those Insects. I can do something for them in this Case: Perhaps you will hear in a little time that I have reconcil'd them to *Mercury*.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

A Warning against Popery. Being an Account of the late Conversion of Mr. John Harvill alias Barnes, an eminent Romish Priest, to the Reform'd Church of England; being the compleatest Account of the gross Cheats and Errors which was ever Practis'd in that Church, of the Confutation of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, of Purgatory, forbidding Priests to Marry, and the Price of Sins very proper to be read in all Protestant Families at this Time. Price Bound 2s. 6d. Printed for John Philips at the Black Ball against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill.

This Day is Publish'd,

The Christian's Gain by Death. A Funeral Sermon occasioned by the Death of the Reverend Mr. Joseph Stenner, late Minister of the Gospel. Preach'd Aug. 22, 1713. Printed by J. Darby, and Sold by A. Bell in Cornhill, J. Baker at Mercer's Chappel in Cheapside, and J. Clark in the Old Change, price 4 d. Where may be had Mr. Quincy's Poem to the Memory of Mr. Stennet.

Just Published,

The Tunbridge Miscellany for the Year 1713. Consisting of Poems, &c. Written at Tunbridge-Wells this Summer; By Several Hands, viz. 1. To Mrs. Colt. 2. To a young married Divine. 3. To Mrs. Briscoe, upon her coming to Tunbridge-Wells, for the Recovery of her Health. 4. To a Lady born in Germany. 5. To Astrilla, upon her Complaint that she was censur'd. 6. To Mrs. Brookes. 7. The Tunbridge Toasts for the Year 1713. 8. Upon Glor. 9. Upon the Ladies new Parade-House. 10. A Letter to Nestor Ironside, Esq; concerning the Dumpling Club, Bacon Club, &c. Printed for E. Curl at the Dial and Bible against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street, and Sold at his Shop upon Tunbridge Walks. price 6 d.

LONDON: Printed for J. Tonson in the Strand; and Sold by A. Baldwin in Warwick-Lane; where Advertisements are taken in, 1713.